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SUBJECT: KOSOVO: REVIEWS OF PM CEKU'S FIRST 100 DAYS
GENERALLY POSITIVE

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SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED; PLEASE PROTECT ACCORDINGLY.

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY. The first 100 days of the government of Kosovo Prime Minister Ceku have been on balance very successful. Ceku has focused his personal attention on Standards-related portfolios -- outreach to minorities, minority-focused legislation, property rights, security -- given priority by the international community in the final status process. Ceku's 100-day report to the Kosovo Assembly prompted fair criticism from the opposition that Ceku has not removed a single minister from office, notwithstanding his strong indication upon taking office that heads would be rolling. However much the political realities of maintaining a delicately balanced governing coalition may have forced Ceku to keep his broom in the closet, we believe he continues to be the right PM at the right time for Kosovo. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) In a July 14 address to the Kosovo Assembly, Kosovo Prime Minister Agim Ceku applauded his own government for its performance during the first 100 days of his administration. He praised in particular the government's focus on fulfillment of UNMIK "Standards of Good Governance" generally and more recent determination to fulfill the Contact Group's 13 "Priorities for Standards Implementation" (reftel A). Ceku placed these government efforts firmly in a context of the final status negotiations and an expectation of imminent independence for Kosovo as well as integration into European structures.

¶3. (SBU) Commenting on his cabinet, Ceku told the media June 28 that he had reviewed the performance of each minister and that "I do not see that any minister has abused his office or not contributed to the Government's success. For the time being, I do not see any reason to change." In the debate that followed the PM's address, opposition leaders pointedly compared the record of current ministers with Ceku's rhetoric upon taking office. On March 10 Agim Ceku had announced a no-nonsense policy calling for every minister to be subjected

to his personal review every 90 days (reftel B). At the time, Ceku acknowledged wide-spread accusations of corruption and vowed that underperforming, let alone corrupt, ministers would be removed. Majority coalition partner Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) publicly authorized Ceku, a member of the junior partner Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK), to fire underperforming LDK ministers. (NOTE. Although the PM would have such legal authority in any event, the LDK gesture was widely seen as conferring political authority on Ceku over LDK ministers as well. END NOTE.)

¶4. (SBU) During the July 14 floor debate, Jakup Krasniqi, Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) caucus leader, complained that Ceku's report took credit for government accomplishments that were actually realized by previous governments (i.e., the 2003-4 PDK government). Veton Surroi, from the Assembly's smaller opposition Reform Party Ora, said the government has been acting without a concrete plan, given that the "same government has been in place through three prime ministers." Within a few days of Ceku's address, the Organization for Democracy, Anticorruption and Dignity "Cohu" ("Wake up" in Albanian), run by former reporter on Surroi's newspaper, issued a report alleging "corruption scandals" in Ceku's government. Cohu cited reports of UNMIK's auditor general reports on the Pristina Airport and alleged that Ceku was ignoring widespread reports of corruption involving Minister of Trade and Industry Bujar Dugolli (AAK).

¶5. (SBU) COMMENT. As Ceku's report rightly boasts, the first 100 days (we are actually past the 130-day mark) of his administration have been marked by a focus on Standards-related action items in a context of a political stability that had eluded Kosovo in the aftermath of the January 21 death of President Ibrahim Rugova. That stability in government has translated to stability and cooperation within the Kosovo final status negotiating team, a necessary

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precondition to a successful final status process. Ceku would like to do more to fulfill his early pledges to hold his ministers to his personal account and is likely to do so as soon as he judges that the coalition he heads could survive the upheaval of firing influential ministers. In the meantime, Ceku has grown accustomed to the taunts of the opposition. And the opposition seems to understand the value of keeping the PM in place. As Surroi said to CDA after the July 14 session, "we said our piece, the debate's over, we're moving on."

¶6. (U) U.S. Office Pristina clears this cable for release in its entirety to U.N. Special Envoy for Kosovo Martti Ahtisaari.

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